

# Long-Awaited Site Transition Finalized

More than 4 years after the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Headquarters issued a plan to reduce the Department's mortgage liability across its complex, the DOE Grand Junction Office (GJO) site officially transferred to private ownership effective October 1, 2001.

On September 19, 2001, DOE signed a quitclaim deed providing title to approximately 46 acres at the DOE-GJO site to the Riverview Technology Corporation. "This has been a long and involved process and we are happy to finally see it come to a productive end," said Donna Bergman-Tabbert, DOE-GJO Manager.

The Riverview Technology Corporation began as the Joint Utilization Commission in October 1997 as an informal community task force to work with DOE on redevelopment opportunities for the Grand Junction site. The commission formally incorporated in summer 1999 to become the nonprofit Riverview Technology Corporation. The corporation is sanctioned by the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County and has an 11-member board of directors consisting of civic and business leaders.

## GJO Remedial Action Project

The GJO Remedial Action Project was established to decontaminate the GJO site, including soil, buildings, surface water, and groundwater. All exterior land areas at the GJO site have been remediated and released for unrestricted use. Seventeen buildings that were either unusable or not economical to remediate were demolished. All remaining DOE-GJO buildings and structures have been radiologically surveyed and released for unrestricted use.

One of the early issues associated with the site transfer was the small amount of residual radioactivity contained in Building 20, the GJO Analytical Chemistry Laboratory, a building with economic and mission-essential values. To address this issue, a working group was assembled beginning in August 1999 with representatives from several levels of DOE, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, State of Colorado, City of Grand Junction, Mesa County, and various contractors to develop property-specific, free-release criteria for Building 20. The building was then evaluated against these criteria.

The working group agreed to a 25 millirem per year (mrem/yr) total effective dose-equivalent criterion for free release. This means that the exposure that could be received by a worker or member of the public from any area in Building 20 must be less than 25 mrem/yr for the building to be released for unrestricted use. Three documents were prepared to provide input to the final release decision. These documents derived the levels of residual radioactivity that would have to exist in the



*Participants in the transfer of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Grand Junction Office facility to the Riverview Technology Corporation were (left to right) Sue Ottman, closing agent with Meridian Land Title L.L.C.; Daniel Wilson, attorney for the City of Grand Junction; Chris Launer, representing the Riverview Technology Corporation; Donna Bergman-Tabbert, Manager, DOE Grand Junction Office; and Cooper Wayman, attorney, DOE Grand Junction Office.*

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building such that exposure could result in a 25 mrem/yr dose, presented a survey and sampling plan, and provided the results of the final status survey. The radiological data collected in the building showed that the residual radioactivity had been reduced to concentrations that were substantially below the established limit and were as low as reasonably achievable. After careful review of the documents, DOE concluded that Building 20 met the criteria and it was released from further radiological controls.

Radiologically contaminated materials are known to be present in the soils under Building 20 and one other building at the site that will continue to be occupied by DOE; both buildings will be remediated by DOE when operations in those buildings cease. Remediation of the radiologically contaminated surface water and groundwater is expected to be accomplished by natural flushing. In May 2000, DOE–GJO issued a final Environmental Assessment and a Finding of No Significant Impact for the transfer of the site to non-DOE ownership. DOE provided public notice of the transfer on March 25, 2001, in the local newspaper. DOE and the State of Colorado responded to public comments.

### **Request for Deferred Remediation**

To manage the contamination that would remain after site transition, DOE submitted a Request for Deferred Remediation to the State of Colorado. The Governor of Colorado signed the deferral application on August 15, 2001, stating “I find the property suitable for transfer.” Obtaining this approval was one of the contingencies to the sales agreement. This is only the second such request to be approved by the State of Colorado and the first for DOE in the state.

Simultaneous with transfer of site ownership, DOE also signed a lease with the Riverview Technology Corporation for space at the GJO site for its ongoing missions. DOE is leasing six buildings at a variable cost per square foot. Chris Launer, Acting Chair of the Riverview Technology Corporation, said, “With this transfer, the community has gained a tremendous asset, not only in the retention of a valuable workforce, but in property that can be reused by other entities that benefit the community. As the new site owners, we look forward to continuing our relationship with DOE.”

### **Other Site Occupants**

The Western Colorado Business Development Corporation signed a lease with DOE in 1999 for 45,000 square feet in several buildings on the site for its Small Business Incubator Program. Although that lease terminated when the site transferred, the Incubator remains as a tenant and will manage the site for the Riverview Technology Corporation. The Riverview Technology Corporation intends to lease the remaining building space to other entities for a mixture of commercial, industrial, and office uses. The U.S. Army Reserve currently occupies Building 7 and uses acreage at the north end of the site for storage and maintenance of vehicles. DOE transferred approximately 8 acres at the site, including Building 7, to the Reserve on November 20, 2001.

Changes at the site, some obvious and some more subtle, came with new ownership. All unnecessary personal property was transferred to the Riverview Technology Corporation along with the real property (land and buildings). In August 2001, employees began using badge card readers to enter buildings to be leased by DOE. “For the most part, other than a few changes in procedures, the new ownership probably won’t directly affect employees,” said Bergman-Tabbert. “We still have our missions to perform, we just don’t own and manage the property we occupy anymore.”❖